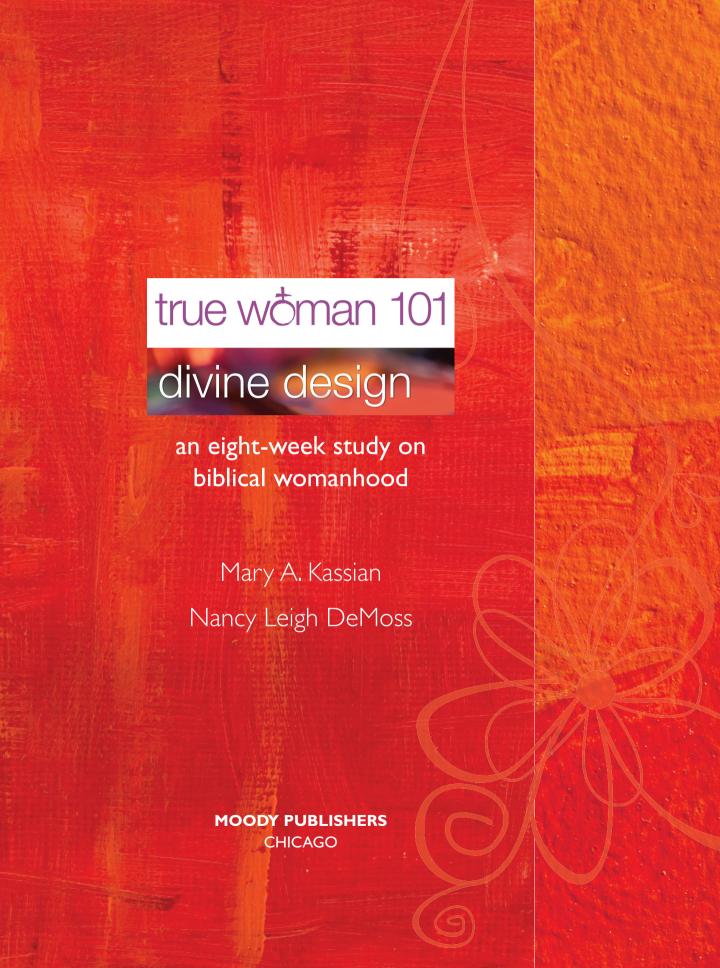
true wôman 101 divine design







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MARY A. KASSIAN AND NANCY LEIGH DEMOSS

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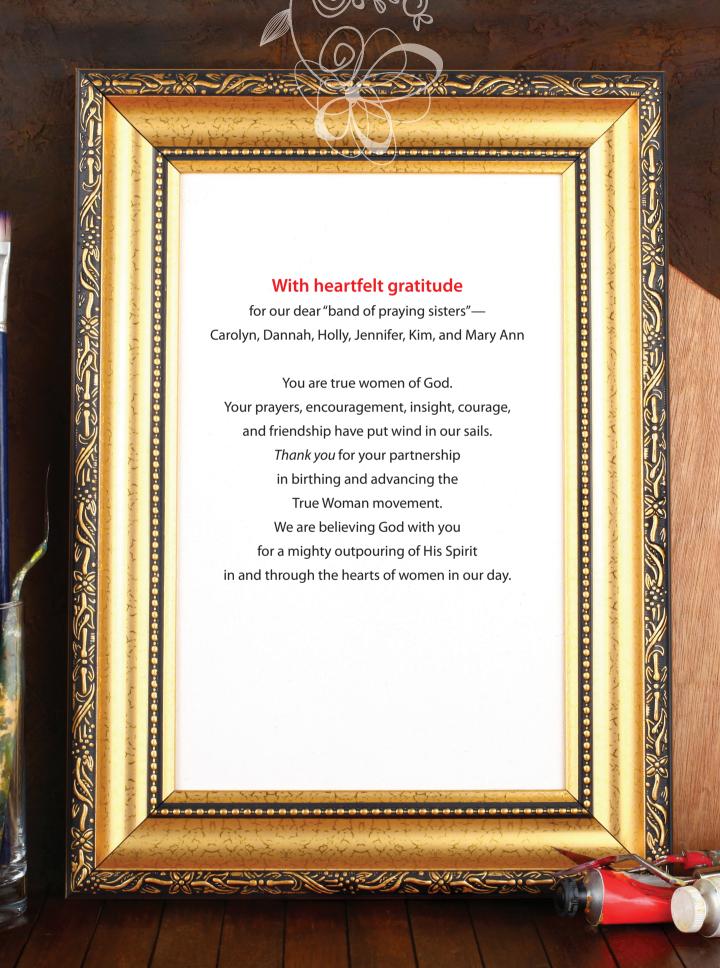
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"True Woman 101: Divine Design lays a beautiful and thorough biblical foundation for the topic of biblical womanhood. I highly recommend it for any woman serious about displaying the glory of God in her distinctive role as a woman." **Mary Delk** Minister for Women, Bethlehem Baptist Church (Minneapolis, MN) "A must-use resource for every congregation in North America. In a culture where diversity is celebrated, the beautiful diversity of biblical manhood and womanhood has been marred and discredited. My dear friends Mary and Nancy reclaim the true picture of God and His love for humanity as seen in His design for our womanhood!" **Dannah Gresh** Bestselling author and founder, Pure Freedom "One of the best compliments a woman can receive is 'She feels comfortable in her own skin.' I want to be that woman, don't you? If you do, then True Woman 101 will help you become her! As you learn about and embrace God's design, you'll get a dramatic makeover from the inside out and will transform your womanhood into something you're far more than just 'comfortable' with; something worth celebrating!" **Jennifer Rothschild** Author, founder WomensMinistry.net and Fresh Grounded Faith Events "The Lord has given Mary and Nancy a message for women that clearly defines womanhood, how she should live, and what purpose God has designed her to fulfill. If you are a woman anywhere between 18 and 108 this book has a specific and personal message for you!" **Debbie Stuart** Director of Women's Ministry, Prestonwood Baptist Church (Plano, TX) "Identity definition and design—God's design—are increasingly minimized if not ignored. We are building a legacy of gender competition and confusion. But God has called us to embrace and celebrate who He created us to be. That's why this resource is such a timely, wonderful gift. This eight-part study will refresh and encourage your heart. This is liberating stuff!" Dr. Crawford and Karen Loritts Authors, speakers; (Crawford) Senior Pastor, Fellowship Bible Church (Roswell, GA)

"Knowing how God has uniquely created women is key to the decisions I make in almost every area of my life. I am so thankful that the Lord has equipped Nancy and Mary to bring to life the timeless truths of Scripture 'for such a time as this.' If you are desperate to know how God's design is meant to play out in your choices, don't pass up this treasure!"

Dr. Juli Slattery

Author, family psychologist, cohost for Focus on the Family

"True Woman 101 is a discipleship resource that combines biblical principles of womanhood with practical applications. The daily readings make you feel as if you are sitting at your kitchen table having coffee with Mary and Nancy. These Titus 2 women take us to the grace of the gospel. They show us Jesus, the One who transforms us into true women."

Susan Hunt

Author, speaker, Women's Ministry Consultant for PCA Christian Education Publications

"True Woman 101 gives women what they chiefly need—an extreme makeover of the interior not the exterior! I appreciate the thorough content which drives home the message that true womanhood is about emanating the beauty and grace of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. When a coalition of humble, intentional women begin to radiate from the inside out, the world will sit up and take notice that the gospel isn't phony, it's the real deal."

Leslie Bennett

Director of Women's Ministries, Northeast Presbyterian Church, PCA (Columbia, SC)

"The True Woman study provides something every modern woman needs: a wake-up call and practical help to live life as a woman of God, rather than (without realizing it) as a woman of the culture."

Shaunti Feldhahn

Author, speaker, columnist





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overview of lessons

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"The greatest influence on earth whether for good or for evil, is possessed by woman."

—ADOLPHE MONOD

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- 144 Day 2: Girls Gone Wild Effect.... Culture's ideal for womanhood stands in direct opposition to God's ideal.
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- 152 Day 4: Smart Girls Get More "Smart girls" know that the place to get true knowledge, freedom, and joy is in a relationship with Christ.
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- **164** Day 1: Beautiful Design God's divine design for womanhood is not only right; it's also good and beautiful!
- **168** Day 2: Beautiful Devotion A True Woman exhibits a bridelike, passionate, wholehearted devotion to Christ.
- 172 Day 3: Beautiful Character A True Woman clothes herself in godliness, displaying the beauty Christ desires in His bride.
- **176** Day 4: Beautiful Disposition A True Woman cultivates a quiet, gentle, amenable disposition.
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- **192** Day 2: Aim to Be Welcoming ... Seek to create a warm, welcoming home.
- **196** Day 3: Aim to Be Helpful...... Resolve to respond to the needs of others.
- **200** Day 4: Aim to Leave a Legacy... Endeavor to leave a legacy for the next generation.
- 204 Day 5: Aim to Make a Difference . . Be intentional about influencing others to embrace God's divine design.
- 208 Drawing It Out ... Drawing It In



introduction: designer womanhood



Designer handbags, designer fashions, designer frames, designer décor ... a lot of women gravitate toward designer brands because they're high quality. They're often especially exquisite. They're authentic. They're true to the designer's precise specifications.

Did you know that God has a divine design for womanhood? And His plan is spectacular—far more attractive than the cheap, fake imitations the world promotes!

The women's movement rejected the idea that God has a divine design for womanhood. It proposed that it was up to women to decide what womanhood was all about. It taught us to believe that our lives—and the choices we make—are all about us. It led us to think that the differences between male and female aren't all that important—that we can arbitrarily choose our roles, and determine the meaning of gender. It encouraged us to adopt a new, feminist-inspired design.

The current cultural ideal for womanhood encourages women to be strident, sexual, self-centered, independent, and—above all—powerful and in control. But sadly, this model of womanhood hasn't delivered the happiness and fulfillment it promised.

We have both been actively involved in ministering to women for more than thirty years and have seen this sadness and disappointment in spades. Again and again, we have witnessed the emotional and relational wreckage of hearts and homes that have gone with the flow and bought into our culture's view of what it means to be a woman. We have received countless letters and emails and looked into the eyes of thousands of women who feel the deep pain of unfulfilled expectations.

In many cases, this dysfunction is the unavoidable consequence of living in a fallen world. But far too often, it's apparent that we are seeing the fallout of widespread confusion and faulty beliefs about a woman's design and mission.

You see, the Bible teaches that it's not up to us to decide what womanhood is all about. It says that God created male and female for a vital, specific purpose. His design isn't arbitrary, unimportant, or expendable.

Your womanhood is not a biological accident. It's not a matter of chance. God was intentional when He made you a woman. And He wants you to discover, embrace, and delight in the beauty of His spectacular design. He wants you to enjoy something so much more valuable than the world's cheap imitations and knockoffs. He wants you to be a True Woman!

What exactly is a True Woman? She is, quite simply, a woman who is being molded and shaped according to

"It is time for women of biblical faith to reclaim our territory. We know the Designer. We have His instruction manual. If we don't display the Divine design of His female creation. no one will. But if we do, it will be a profound testimony to a watching, needy world."1

Susan Hunt



God's design. She's a woman who loves Jesus and whose life is grounded in, tethered to, and enabled by Christ and His gospel. As a result, she is serious about bringing her thoughts and actions in line with what the Bible says about who she is and how she ought to live. She is a woman who rejects the world's pattern for womanhood, and gladly wears God's designer label instead.

the true woman movement

Years ago, the Lord began to put on each of our hearts a burden for a new women's movement a countercultural revolution, in which women would reject the world's model of womanhood, and would joyfully follow Christ and embrace His design.² When our paths finally intersected and we discovered our common burden, we began to seek the Lord together about how to share that vision with other women.

Long story short, in October 2008, over 6,000 women from forty-eight states and seven countries gathered in Chicago for the first True Woman conference, hosted by Revive Our Hearts along with other ministry partners. The goal of that event was to help women . . .

- Discover and embrace God's design and mission for their lives
- Reflect the beauty and heart of Jesus Christ to their world
- Intentionally pass the baton of Truth on to the next generation
- Pray earnestly for an outpouring of God's Spirit in their families, churches, nation, and world

Since that initial launch, thousands of women have attended subsequent True Woman conferences. Thousands more from scores of countries around the world have signed the True Woman Manifesto, are following the True Woman blog, and/or are interacting with other women through various True Woman social media communities. True Woman events, small groups, and studies have spontaneously sprung up all across the country.

What a joy it is to see True Woman becoming a grassroots movement—not only in the U.S. but in other countries around the world—through which Christ is being put on display in a greater way through women's lives!

This True Woman Bible study is a response to the many requests we have received for further biblical teaching and practical resources. It contains essential, foundational teaching on what the Bible says womanhood is all about. That's why we've called it *True Woman 101*.

The eight weeks in this study are each divided into five lessons—it should take you approximately twenty minutes to complete each lesson. To get the most out of this study, we'd suggest you go through



it with a group of friends. At the end of each week, we've provided some questions to help you discuss what you've read and further explore and apply the Bible's teachings on womanhood. When you're done, encourage your friends to start their own groups. You'll find many additional resources, including companion videos and helps for group leaders, at www.truewoman101.com.

Decades ago, the women's movement set out to spread its radical message and vision through small groups that met, multiplied, and eventually ignited a revolution. Our desire is that a new revolution will take root and spread in our day, as Christian women band together to ask, "How can we more fully reflect the beauty and gospel of Christ to our world, through the expression of our true, biblical design?"

beyond caricatures and cookie cutters

The Bible presents a design for True Womanhood that applies to *all* women— at any age and at any stage of life—old, young; single, married, divorced, widowed; with children or without, whatever. Its design applies to women of every personality type, every educational level, every career track, every socioeconomic status, and every culture. God's design transcends social customs, time, and circumstance.

In this study, we have tried to focus on timeless biblical principles rather than the specific application of those principles. We wanted to provide a resource with foundational teaching that could be applied to different stages and circumstances of life, and that would be just as applicable to the great-granddaughters of our generation as it is to us.

When it comes to womanhood, most of us have been exposed to clichéd advice, shallow caricatures, and cookie-cutter solutions. It is our hope that this resource will shift the discussion to a better focus. We pray that it will

- enable you to explore God's timeless design for womanhood straight from His Word
- help you wrestle with how to apply God's design to your season of life
- encourage you to have grace toward women who differ in life circumstance and application
- equip you to pass on the message of True Womanhood to the next generation

Caricatures and cookie-cutter patterns won't do. God's design for womanhood is much broader and more glorious than that.

Discovering and living out the meaning of True Womanhood will be a journey for you, as it has been (and is) for us. At points, you may find yourself disagreeing with what you're reading, or struggling with some of the implications of this teaching. We've had some of those same reactions ourselves! We would simply encourage you to turn to God's Word with an open, seeking heart. Ask His Spirit to teach you, to give you understanding, and to incline your heart to say "Yes, Lord!" to His Word and His ways.

a divine design!

Why can't a woman be more like a man?" That's the question famously posed by Professor Henry Higgins in the classic musical My Fair Lady. It's a good question. Why can't a woman be more like a man? Why can't a man be more like a woman? What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a man? What's the difference? And does it really matter?

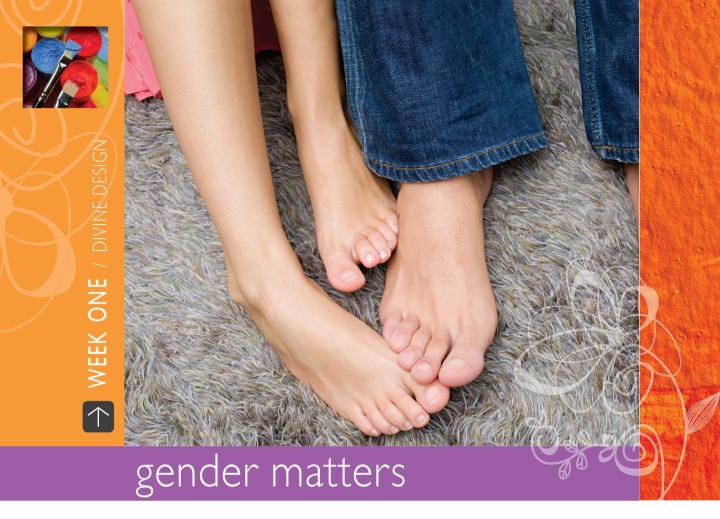
The Bible's answer to the professor's question is that God doesn't want His daughters to be more like men. Nor does He want His sons to be more like women. God created male and female. He isn't interested in blurring or obliterating gender—He's interested in redeeming it. His divine design reflects profound truths about God's character and about the gospel. He wants us to discover the beauty of His plan for manhood and womanhood, and to experience the joy and fulfillment of being exactly who He created us to be.

That's the reason for this study. And that's our hope and prayer for you. Whatever your season of life, whatever your current challenges or circumstances, may you glorify God and make the gospel believable to those around you, as you reflect His divine design and become His True Woman!



"I believe the time is ripe for a new movementa seismic holy quake of countercultural men and women who dare to take God at His Word men and women whose hearts are broken over the gender confusion and spiritual/emotional/ relational carnage of our day, and who have the courage to believe and delight in God's plan for male and female."

-Mary A. Kassian



Most of us have learned (the hard way?!) that you need to follow the manufacturer's instructions, if you want to put things together right. Recently I (Mary) bought and assembled a large wall unit for my husband's office. It was packaged in about a dozen boxes and contained hundreds of pieces of hardware.

I followed the directions step-by-step. Each piece had a specific purpose that became apparent as the unit came together. The process was complex and took several hours. I made some mistakes, and had to go back and pore over the pattern a few times, but I finally got it put together right. And it looks beautiful!

I'm so glad the manufacturer of that wall unit included instructions. The designer of a product is the one who knows that product best. The manufacturer is the one who knows why and how it's made, how to put it together, and how it's supposed to work.

The same principle applies to our lives. Our Creator knows us best. He's the one who knows how and why He created us male and female. As the Designer, He knows the proper way to order and fit together our lives and relationships—according to their intended design.

Jesus was once confronted with a question about male-female relationships. The Pharisees wanted to discuss cultural customs and practices about divorce, and have Jesus endorse one of two popular views (Matt. 19:3–9). But Jesus took the discussion to an entirely different level.

Jesus indicated that in order to get their thinking right, they needed to look beyond all their cultural customs and social conventions, as well as the distortions that had been introduced by sin. They couldn't hope to get things right by arguing over personal opinions or a list of human "dos" and "don'ts."

In order to think and behave correctly, they needed to understand God's original and highest intention for man and woman. And to do this, they needed to look back to creation—to God's pattern—to understand the intent of His original design.

It isn't possible to understand the Bible's teaching on men and women without first understanding God's purpose in creating them. So that's where we're going to start. We're going to lay the foundation of True Womanhood by going back to the first few chapters of Genesis. We'll have a look at what God had in mind, and what things were like between man and woman in the paradise of Eden, before sin marred our relationships.

As you walk through this week's lessons, try to do what Jesus challenged the Pharisees to do. First, look beyond the customs, social conventions, and distortions of male and female of which you are no doubt painfully aware. Second, remember that God's original design for male and female is good. In fact, God's assessment is that it's better than good . . . it's very good (Gen. 1:31)!

Regardless of what you may have been told by our culture, regardless of the pain you may have experienced due to the brokenness and twisting of sin, His plan for womanhood—and His plan for you—is beautiful and it is good!

As we look into the Designer's manual together, we think you'll see just how important your womanhood is, and how much gender really does matter!

As obvious as it may be that it's important to follow the designer's directions when it comes to assembling shelves, it's a point so many women (and men) miss when it comes to "assembling" their lives and relationships. The fact is, any time we fail to consult the Designer and follow the directions He has provided, we're going to end up with a mess!

Perhaps you relate—you've tried to build your life and relationships on your own, without the guidance of your Designer, and the result is chaos. Maybe it's time for you to go back and pore over the pattern to find out what your womanhood is all about.

The good news is that Jesus Christ can change you, rearrange the pieces of your life, and put things together the way He intended, so your life can become a thing of beauty and usefulness!







on display

WEEK ONE / DAY I

"Then God said. 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Genesis 1:26-27

Have you ever found yourself pausing as you were on the verge of doing something really important? Last summer, I (Mary) sewed a dress for my son's wedding. I had checked all the measurements, made all the necessary adjustments, and carefully pinned the pattern pieces to the material.

I picked up my scissors and positioned the sharp blades along the first cut line. But then, just before shearing the costly fabric, I took a deep breath and momentarily paused.

It's not that I was uncertain. I knew I had gotten everything right. It's just that I knew that my next action was significant in the pursuit of my goal and the feeling caught my attention. I imagine it's a bit like the moment before a surgeon makes the first incision, or an artist lays hammer and chisel to an exquisite piece of marble, or a gemologist cuts the first facet of a weighty diamond.

In the first chapter of Genesis, we see the Creator reflectively pause before His final and greatest creative act—the language introducing this act ("Let us make man in our image") indicates an upcoming deliberative action with forethought. There was no question in God's mind about what He was going to do. No. He had settled on His plan long before the foundation of the world. It was already in motion. At His word, the galaxies and planets, the sun and moon had all been formed and aligned. The



earth had ripened with life: the ground had sprouted vegetation; the sky, sea, and land now teemed with every sort of living creature.

Everything was in place. Everything was ready. It all led up to this moment —and, as we will see, this moment pointed to another moment far off in time but eternally present in the mind of God. THE moment. The significance of what God was about to do was deeper and more profound than even the angels could fathom. He was about to make man—and to make him male and female.



Genesis 1:26-27 describes God's "reflective moment." Read the verses in the margin and fill in the blanks of the diagram below. GOD In our__ After our ____ Male Female Who do you think the dialogue in Genesis 1:26 was between? To whom does "us" and "our" refer? The discussion about creating man and woman took place among members of the Godhead. It may have been among all three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But at the very least, it involved the Father and His Son, as Scripture draws parallels between that relationship and the relationship of the man and the woman (see 1 Cor. 11:3). We'll talk more about that later, but for now, just think about this: When God created male and female, He had the dynamic of His own relationship in mind. The Lord created the two sexes to reflect something about God. He patterned the male-female relationship ("them") after the "us/our" relationship that exists within God. He designed the two sexes to put God on display. Why do you think God created two different sexes, and not just one?



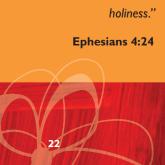
"What is man that you are mindful of him, ... you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet."

Psalm 8:4-6

"Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Colossians 3:10

"Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."



displaying His image



Just as the photo of my dad provides a snapshot of what he looked like, so mankind provides a glimpse of what God is like. Humans were the only creatures that God created "in His image" and "after His likeness."

The word "cloud" contains words closely associated with the concept of "image" and "likeness." Cross out the three words that do not belong:

compare model correlate mirror
hide reflect imitate picture display
represent copy shadow emulate
resemble conceal disregard

What are some ways you can think of that humans resemble/reflect the image of God?

Being created in God's image includes the ability to think and make moral choices. It means that we share in God's nature. Humans have personality; they have the capacity for creativity, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, and justice.





Scripture also indicates that being made in the image of God gives man capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him. What's more, it allows man to have dominion over the work of God's hands—to govern creation as God's representative.

How does the truth that mankind is created in the image of God speak to the chronic feelings of inferiority and worthlessness that many women experience?

The photo of my dad in my hallway puts my dad on display for everyone who comes into my house to see. Likewise, God want us to put Him on display, so that everyone who looks at us sees the beauty of His image. It's a profound honor and responsibility to bear the image of God.

Read Isaiah 43:6–7 in your Bible. For what purpose does God say He created "sons" and "daughters"?

Scripture teaches that womanhood isn't about prettying ourselves up and putting ourselves on display. Our purpose in life is to put God on display—to reflect His glory in ways we as women were uniquely created to do.

Do you feel that your womanhood displays God's glory? Explain why or why not.

Close today's lesson by praying and asking the Lord to deepen your understanding of what it means to display His glory as a woman.

